

**BEFORE THE BOARD OF HEALTH  
SPOKANE REGIONAL HEALTH DISTRICT**

**RESOLUTION #16-05**

RE: RESOLUTION ENCOURAGING ALL HEALTH CARE FACILITIES TO ADOPT POLICIES THAT MANDATE ALL STAFF TO EITHER RECEIVE ANNUAL INFLUENZA VACCINE OR WEAR A MASK DURING THE INFLUENZA SEASON.

WHEREAS, influenza (flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses; and

WHEREAS, influenza viruses cause seasonal epidemics annually from fall through winter; and

WHEREAS, influenza is highly contagious. After becoming infected with influenza, people may be able to infect others beginning 1 day before symptoms develop and up to 5 to 7 days after becoming sick. Some people can be infected with the flu virus but have no symptoms; and

WHEREAS, influenza can cause mild to severe illness. Sinus and ear infections are examples of moderate complications from flu, while pneumonia is a more serious and common flu complication. Other possible serious complications triggered by flu can include inflammation of the heart (myocarditis), brain (encephalitis) or muscle (myositis, rhabdomyolysis) tissues, and multi-organ failure (for example, respiratory and kidney failure). Flu virus infection of the respiratory tract can trigger an extreme inflammatory response in the body and can lead to sepsis, the body's life-threatening response to infection. Flu also can make chronic medical problems worse. For example, people with asthma may experience asthma attacks while they have the flu, and people with chronic heart disease may experience a worsening of this condition triggered by flu; and

WHEREAS, young children, adults aged 65 years and older, pregnant women, and people with certain chronic medical conditions are among those groups of people who are at high risk of serious flu complications, possibly requiring hospitalization and sometimes resulting in death; and

WHEREAS, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices estimates that influenza causes an average of more than 200,000 hospitalizations and 3,000 to 49,000 deaths annually in the United States. In some years, it is estimated that influenza attributed to more than 600,000 hospitalizations and 95,000 intensive care unit admissions. In Spokane county during the 2014-2015 flu season, 225 people were hospitalized due to flu and six deaths were attributed to flu-related illness; and

WHEREAS, those at highest risk for serious illness and death are persons with chronic illnesses and those over age 65. According to the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, an analysis of data from three managed-care organizations collected during 1996 through 2000 estimated that the risk of influenza-associated hospitalizations among persons aged 65 years and older with high-risk underlying medical conditions was 55.6 per 10,000 persons, compared with 18.7 per 10,000 among lower risk persons in this age group. In comparison, persons aged 50 to 64 years who had underlying medical conditions had an estimated risk of influenza-associated hospitalization of 12.3 per 10,000 persons and healthy adults in the same age group had an estimated risk of 1.8 per 10,000 persons. Deaths associated with influenza are also most frequent among older adults. From the 1976 to 2007 seasons, an estimated yearly average of 21,098 influenza-related deaths occurred among adults aged 65 years and older, corresponding to 90 percent of estimated annual average deaths across all age groups. Although Spokane county data

for direct comparison is limited, people over 60 years of age represented between 39 to 68 percent of persons hospitalized for flu each year in the 2001 to 2016 flu seasons. Population demographics indicate that those over the age of 65 constitute approximately 15 percent of the Spokane county population.

WHEREAS, many of the residents of long term care facilities are over age 65 and have chronic illnesses, which compounds their risk of severe influenza. In addition, residents, staff and visitors mingle regularly, which increases the potential for the illness to circulate in long term care facilities; and

WHEREAS, influenza vaccination can reduce flu illnesses and prevent flu-related hospitalizations. It is estimated that in the United States since the 2010-2011 season, influenza vaccination has averted annually as many as 7.2 million cases of flu, 3 million clinic visits, 120,000 hospitalizations and 16,000 deaths; and

WHEREAS, the influenza viruses circulating each year change, thus requiring annual vaccination; and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that all persons aged 6 months and older receive an annual influenza vaccination, with few exceptions; and

WHEREAS, health care providers and medical facility staff are considered to be at substantial risk for acquiring and transmitting influenza. Influenza can cause outbreaks of severe respiratory illness among hospitalized persons and long-term-care residents. Influenza outbreaks in hospitals and long-term care facilities have been associated with low vaccination rates among health care providers and medical facility staff; and

WHEREAS, and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) and the Healthcare (formerly Hospital) Infection Control Practices Advisory Committee (HICPAC) recommend influenza vaccination for health care professionals and staff in health care settings; and

WHEREAS, the Healthy People 2020 annual target goal for influenza vaccination among health care personnel is 90 percent. As reported in the September 18, 2015 Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report 79.0 percent of health care personnel reported having received an influenza vaccination for the 2015-16 season, similar to the 77.3 percent coverage among health care professionals reported for the 2014-15 season. Vaccination coverage was highest in hospitals (91.2 percent) and lowest in long-term care settings (69.2 percent); and

WHEREAS, mandatory vaccination and mask wearing policies have been successful in several healthcare settings. For example, following implementation of the policy at Virginia Mason Hospital in Seattle, the rate of flu vaccine uptake rose to above 98 percent, compared to 30 to 50 percent in the years prior;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF HEALTH, as follows:

The Board of Health commends those health care facilities that have implemented mandatory influenza vaccination or mask wearing by all staff.

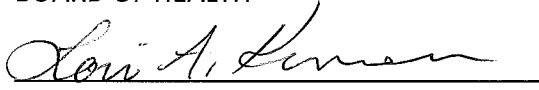
The Board of Health encourages all health care facilities, particularly long term care facilities, to adopt similar policies that require all staff to either receive an annual influenza vaccination or wear a mask during flu season.

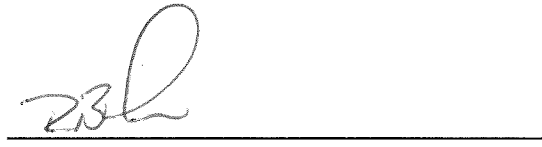
The Board of Health further encourages all health care facilities to develop comprehensive influenza vaccination strategies that include targeted education about the disease, including

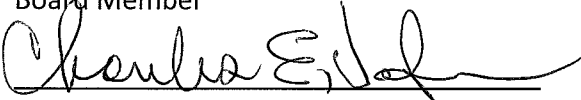
disease risk among health care personnel and patients, and about the vaccine. In addition, strategies should include easily accessible vaccination sites and informing staff about their locations and schedule. Health care facilities are encouraged to provide influenza vaccine at no cost to personnel and to consider incentives to encourage immunization. Consistent enforcement of mask wearing requirements for those staff who are not vaccinated is also encouraged.

Signed this 29th day of September 2016 in Spokane, Washington.


SPOKANE REGIONAL HEALTH DISTRICT  
BOARD OF HEALTH

  
Board Member


  
Board Member

  
Board Member

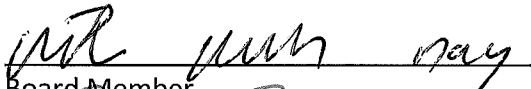
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